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SUBJECT: HUMALA VISA ISSUE FOCUSES ATTENTION ON HIS ROLE IN
ANDAHUAYLAS UPRISING

REF: A. LIMA 1807

[1](#)B. LIMA 1681
[1](#)C. 05 LIMA 0139
[1](#)D. 05 LIMA 0093
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Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) Union por el Peru (UPP) presidential candidate Ollanta Humala and his campaign spokesmen continue to characterize the January 2005 revocation of Humala's U.S. visa as an attempt by the U.S. to destabilize his campaign. About 150 Humala supporters staged a protest demonstration outside the Embassy on 5/10. Humala's wife Nadine sought to counteract criticism of her husband's links to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez by criticizing the latter's intromissions in the Peruvian election campaign. APRA candidate Alan Garcia, whom Humala has characterized as a U.S. "puppet," called on the Embassy to renew Humala's visa. A popular TV news magazine aired a hard-hitting report on 5/10, highlighting Ollanta Humala's initial support for the January 2005 armed uprising in Andahuaylas that resulted in the killing of four policemen. Meanwhile, a recent poll found that Peruvians rank the United States as their country's best friend. END SUMMARY.

HUMALISTAS STAY ON THE OFFENSIVE

[1](#)3. (U) In response to USG confirmation that Humala was revoked in January 2005, the candidate and his supporters have kept up a steady drumbeat of protests, claiming that (1) they were unaware of the visa cancellation and (2) that the cancellation represents a cover for U.S. Embassy intervention in Peru's campaign. Speaking at a rally in Arequipa, a Humala stronghold, the UPP candidate stated that the public notice of his visa revocation in the midst of the second round campaign was an effort "to destabilize candidate Ollanta Humala." (COMMENT: Humala conveniently ignored the fact that it was his campaign that broke the story. END COMMENT.) Humala added that he would not apply for another visa. Instead, he demanded that the U.S. restore his previous one. "Just as they have taken it away, they have to

restore it, without (me) having to submit any kind of application."

¶4. (U) Other Humala spokespersons kept up the visa theme. Humala's spouse, Nadine, said the revocation indicated a lack of respect for her husband and that, should it have resulted from his alleged involvement in the Andahuaylas uprising, the revocation would constitute a clear act of intervention in the campaign. In response to the U.S. Embassy public statement that Humala had been informed of the revocation (Ref A), UPP Congressman-elect Daniel Abugattas said, "They (U.S. spokespersons) are trying to glide over the intervention of the U.S. Embassy. They never informed Commandante Ollanta of the cancellation of his visa...."

¶5. (U) Some 150 Humala supporters, carrying pro-Humala and anti-U.S. signs and banners, staged a noisy but orderly protest across the street from the U.S. Embassy from 16:00 - 20:00 on 5/10.

...BUT ALSO SUGGEST A TONAL SHIFT

¶6. (U) While Humala's campaign kept up a steady drumbeat of alleged outrage over the visa revocation, there were signs of shifts in the message. For the first time, Humala treated the topic with some humor. He concluded his remarks in Arequipa with a sarcastic quip: "They have taken away my visa. What will happen to me?"

¶7. (U) Nadine Humala, the candidate's wife and perhaps its most effective spokesperson, did not focus on the visa issue in her most recent comments, instead addressing Venezuelan

President Chavez' recent intromissions in the Peruvian election campaign (Ref B). She told a television audience that Chavez' comments had "bothered me a little. I understand that he has a very cowboy style, that he has, we might say, 'loose lips.' But enough is enough. He understands that (now), it seems to me." UPP Congressman-elect Abugattas went even further, suggesting that perhaps Chavez had been working for Alan Garcia. Garcia, for his part, took a statesmanlike stance that conveniently also sought to rebut Humala's charges that he is a U.S. puppet (Ref A), calling on the Embassy to issue Humala a visa as the latter is now, "the candidate of millions of Peruvians."

VISA QUESTION FOCUSES ATTENTION ON ANDAHUAYLAS UPRISING

¶8. (U) The visa revocation has refocused media and public attention on Ollanta Humala's role in the Andahuaylas uprising (Refs C-E). The popular Peruvian news program "The Indiscreet Window" picked up on this issue on 5/10, airing an audiotape of a long statement to the press, read aloud by Ollanta Humala by phone from Seoul, Korea (where he had recently been relieved from his Army Attache post), as the uprising began:

"I call on the Peruvian people, in accordance with my declaration from today, January 1, 2005, to take up the fight to recapture democracy. This fight means not recognizing the authority of Alejandro Toledo, the President. This must be done to recover popular sovereignty, which has been stolen from us. It is time to rise up against the government and the anti-patriotic political caste and show that the Peruvian people are capable of assuming a virile attitude. A people who have been swindled by a government that has deceived them, that day-by-day de-legitimizes itself and places itself on the margin of illegality. This dramatic situation compels all Reservists (Ethnocacerista foot soldiers)s to carry out a popular insurgency. This is a right and I demand it!

This same situation affects the citizenry. I call on them to assist in the popular insurgency with marches and

mobilizations demanding the departure of Alejandro Toledo.

January 1, 2005
Seoul, South Korea
Commandante Ollanta Humala Tasso"

¶9. (U) The news program followed this up with footage of Ollanta Humala backpedaling before the press a few days later, after the death of the four policemen and the public rejection of the uprising. He then denied that he had supported his brother's actions and stated that he had only supported "the right to insurgency" against an unconstitutional government that is enshrined in the Peruvian constitution. Program commentators Cecilia Valenzuela and Gustavo Gorriti then consulted the relevant constitutional text and found the text reads that popular insurgency is justified, but only in the face of a "usurper" regime, not against an elected one like President Toledo's.

PERUVIANS LIKE US

¶10. (U) A recent Datum poll indicates that Humala's attempts to use attacks on the U.S. to improve his popularity and reduce Garcia's could well boomerang. The nationwide poll, carried out on 5/8 and published two days later, asked Peruvians to rate which country is "Peru's best friend." The United States came in first with 24 percent, with Brazil second at 16 percent. Bolivia ranked third with eight percent, while Venezuela was lumped in with "other countries." When asked which "Latin American" country was Peru's best friend, 18 percent of respondents replied U.S. (Datum's pollsters flagged the second response, noting that the naming of the United States as Peru's best Latin American friend came up spontaneously and with such frequency that they were compelled to list the response even though the U.S. is not a Latin American country). Previously, Humala had tried to reassure Peruvian voters that he could maintain good

relations with the U.S. His present attempt to manage the damage from Chavez' clumsy interference by casting the U.S. as an adversary of his campaign puts him at odds with public opinion.

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) The Humala camp's decision to raise the visa revocation issue in an attempt to cast the UPP candidate as a victim of U.S. interference in the electoral campaign seems to be backfiring badly. Not only has the press reported the issue fairly, demonstrating that the Humala campaign raised the issue and the USG action was taken months before Humala's candidacy was launched, but it has also focused the media's attention on his questionable role in the 2005 Andahuaylas uprising and its aftermath. Humala's latest comments, treating the visa case humorously, and wife Nadine's criticism of Chavez's intromissions, appear to be examples of the couple trying to close the barn door long after the horse has bolted. The Datum poll's results on presidential preferences echoed the recent Apoyo poll's findings, giving Garcia a 14 point lead (57-43 percent) over Humala. So long as the Humala campaign continues to commit political gaffes, there is little likelihood that it can reverse these voting tendencies. END COMMENT.
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